

the United States Government owes for land the tribes surrendered reluctantly more than a century ago. America has never even come close to meeting those obligations. You can see the legacy of this neglect in the harsh realities of life in Indian Country today: houses with no electricity, plumbing, or telephones. On some reservations in South Dakota, people live in homes with no running water; they have to haul water from 15 or 20 miles away. It is not unusual on reservations in South Dakota for 20 members of an extended family to share one small, three-bedroom home. Three hundred families on Pine Ridge are living in homes that are contaminated with black mold. The Pine Ridge Reservation needs 3,000 new houses just to meet the current demand.

During the depths of the Great Depression, 25 percent of Americans were unemployed. Today, on many reservations in South Dakota and other States, the unemployment rate is twice that high—or higher.

Native Americans live sicker and die younger than other Americans as a result of inadequate health care. Their higher rates of diabetes, heart disease, sudden infant death syndrome, tuberculosis, alcoholism, and many other serious health problems are the direct result of our Government's long history of dramatically underfunding Indian health. Our Government spends twice as much per person on health care for federal prisoners as it does on health care for Native Americans. I am still baffled by that statistic. We spend twice as much per person on health care for Federal prisoners in this country—\$3,800 per capita—as we do on the children on Indian reservations—\$1,900 per capita this year. The rationing of health care at Indian Health clinics and hospitals is so severe that sick and injured people who are not in immediate danger of losing their life or a limb are routinely turned away and denied any care. This is immoral.

Tribal roads make up two-and-a-half percent of Federal roads in this country, yet tribes receive only one-half-of-one-percent of Federal road funding. The poor condition of many tribal roads is a significant reason that the rate of fatal traffic accidents on tribal roads is four times higher than the national average. It is also a major obstacle to economic opportunity in Indian Country.

These are just a few of the ways the Federal Government is failing to meet its trust and treaty obligations to Native people and tribes. Unfortunately, President Bush's proposed budget for next year would make things even worse. Dozens of programs serving Native Americans and Alaska Natives are flat-lined, reduced, or simply eliminated.

According to the National Congress of American Indians, the President's proposed budget cuts Indian hospital and clinic construction by 56 percent; Indian school construction by 19 per-

cent; and tribal college funding by 11.5 percent. The tribal COPS program is slated to be cut by 20 percent, the tribal courts program by 26 percent, and the Indian Housing Loan Guarantee Program by 83 percent. The President's proposed budget also cuts \$52 million from the BIA for tribal law enforcement, tribal roads, and Indian child welfare programs.

Earlier this month, BIA Assistant Secretary Dave Anderson shocked tribes with an announcement that BIA programs will be slashed another \$79 million in fiscal year 2006.

The president of the National Congress of American Indians, Tex Hall, has said, "Asking us to somehow prioritize which programs in the BIA should be cut is like asking Indian Country to decide which child should go hungry, which elder should go unprotected, and which of those who need medical help should go untreated."

Rather than do that, the National Congress of American Indians and BIA's Tribal Budget Advisory Council met recently with BIA officials in Washington over 2 days to develop an alternative budget. A tribal leader from my State, John Steele, president of the Oglala Sioux Tribe, is a member of that advisory council.

Assistant Secretary Anderson visited South Dakota reservations recently, so I know he is familiar with the staggering unmet needs of Indian Country. He surely must know that cuts such as those recommended by the White House will do real harm to people and communities that have already suffered greatly because of the policies and neglect of the Federal Government.

I hope Assistant Secretary Anderson will consider carefully the recommendations of the Tribal Budget Advisory Council as he prepares his budget request for fiscal year 2006. If he will take a strong stand for this government to meet its trust and treaty obligations, I know he will find many allies in Congress. I am one of them.

But Assistant Secretary Anderson and Interior Secretary Norton do not have to wait until the department completes its fiscal year 2006 budget proposal. They can do something today that will not cost a dime and will make a significant difference in the lives of thousands of Native Americans, especially children.

Three times now, the Federal judge hearing the Cobell v. Norton Indian trust case has had to order the Interior Department to shut down its computer system to protect individual Indian money accounts from hackers. Every time BIA has shut down computers in the Office of Special Trustee, it has shut down the computers serving Indian schools as well. The last time, the shutdown lasted for 5 days. Such disruptions cause serious problems for teachers, students, and school administrators.

In response to a recent letter from me, Interior Department officials said

they did not choose to shut down the BIA school computers; they were forced to do so when the judge ordered the Indian trust computers shut down.

I have been told there is a simple solution: All Interior Department officials have to do is properly certify and verify to the court hearing the Cobell lawsuit that the BIA school computers are separate from the trust fund computers and protected from intrusion. Based on the department's certification and verification, if the trust fund computers ever have to be shut down again, BIA school computers will be spared. It is a simple step that can make a difference in the education of Indian children, and I urge the Interior Department to do it as soon as possible.

I also ask the Interior Department, the White House, and our Republican colleagues to work with us to come up with budgets that honor America's trust and treaty obligations to Indian people and tribes—next year, the year after that, and every year. This should not be a partisan issue.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader's time has expired.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader's time will be reserved for future use.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order there is a transaction for the period of morning business for up to 90 minutes, with the first 30 minutes under the control of the Democratic leader or his designee, the second 30 minutes under the majority leader or his designee, and the final 30 minutes equally divided between the assistant minority leader and the Senator from California, Mrs. FEINSTEIN.

The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I yield myself 10 minutes.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

IRAQ

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, a year ago this Saturday, President Bush dressed up in a flight suit, flew out to the aircraft carrier *Abraham Lincoln*, and declared "Mission Accomplished" in Iraq.

Our mission was far from accomplished then, and it is far from accomplished now.

At his press conference in the White House earlier this month, the President was asked if he knew of any mistakes he had made, and he said he couldn't think of any. It is too much to expect that he would have mentioned Iraq, but he might at least have mentioned the trip to the carrier. The trip was nothing more than a photo op tailored for the 2004 election.